The Mustard Seed Catholic Worker

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Early February 2016

Dear friends of the Mustard Seed,

At long last, a word from us to you, dear ones, as we enter February… even as we are still catching up on "thank-you" notes for Christmas! So many of you have been so generous to us here at the Seed. Please accept, with this little newsletter, our heartfelt thanks for you and all you have done and continue to do to keep it all going!

January was a busy month. Just keeping up with the regular round makes for much busyness these days. The meal and the food pantry keep us occupied. Giving what we can in the form of warm clothing; household goods; soaps, toothbrushes and paste and many other donated items that blessedly come our way (such as a breast milk pump and infant clothing that served the babe of a young mother)… all this keeps us and the place humming.

The Mustard Seed is a place of many small and occasionally large exchanges that we sense (and hope!) make for good and significant change in the world. Like the mustard seed in the parable- who we are and what we do is small- there is all potential in that little seed. When fully grown the fruit of that tiny seed sees the birds of the air finding rest in its shade! Our birds come in many shapes, colors, sizes, forms…and to all these we seek to offer some rest from what is for many a weariness born of much struggle. Much gratitude, dear friends, for your part in these shared labors of love and compassion that hope to offer those who need it some respite.

Some news highlights of late:

- The Catholic Free Press ran an article on the Mustard Seed in their January 12th issue that focused on our recent changes: http://www.catholicfreepress.org/featured-article-2/2016/01/12/mustard-seeds-founders-find-new-paths-for-hospitality/
- Holy Trinity Church of Harvard and Bolton, Saint John the Evangelist of Hopkinton and the Paxton Women's Club took the lead in supplying Christmas gifts this year. The faces of children and adults lit up upon receipt of such largesse from these folks in particular. Of course, we thank all our regular groups and individuals who faithfully feed the many who come to our door with more than food during the holidays. A dear woman brought a

gingerbread village for the 11th year. Many brought special goodies to share. Thank you all!

- We continue to pray as a community on Friday evenings at 7:00 and we welcome those who feel called to pray with us to please join us. We will have Mass with Fr. Hugo and the WPI Newman Club on the 12th of February and again with Fr. James Mazzone on the 19th. We have lay-led prayer on the other Fridays in the month.
- Our own Geri DiNardo has written a lovely book, "Saints and Rascals: A Catholic Worker Memoir" that we expect will be published very soon. It is a window into the life and adventures (and misadventures!) of the early Mustard Seed. If you are interested in getting a signed copy for a donation, please let us know. Thanks and "Yay, Geri!"
- We had the unusual experience of having a bank fall in love with us. A first! And it was love at first sight at that! Thanks, Bay State, for your help and advocacy on our behalf for the securing of more financial resources to do this work!

Photo by Karen Mulcahy of the Bay State crew with young Marcos (in orange) from the Seed

- Boy and Girl Scouts have been doing their part with outreach to folks here, serving the meal and also listening to the Catholic Worker story. A scout leader friend had passed away not long ago and it seems these connections followed from his intercession above. Bless you, the late Rich Seguin!
- On MLK Day, Fed Ex delivered 200 peanut butter & jelly sandwiches that went fast!
- Students from the area colleges and university, recently returned from their respective breaks, are back lending a helping hand. We love our students.
- The young women from Serenity House at the Grafton Job Corps continue to serve once a month as do folks from Saint Paul's Cathedral, Saint Mark's in Sutton and Saint

Columba's in Paxton. Many individuals and some families serve on a regular basis as well. The youth of Saint Columba's are doing a special drive to provide goods and resources to assist our food pantry and they will be coming on the Feast of Saint Joseph, March 19th, for deep cleaning and other helpful labors. We welcome such initiatives as we can as we endeavor to better meet the multiple needs of the people who come to us. It is also to the many among our beloved poor who themselves work alongside us to keep the house going that we give thanks. As we see it, it is a remarkable work of God in us that so many from different backgrounds labor side by side to do what needs to be done. Deo gratias!

- Our cellar floor recently received a face-lift that will make the use of the front rooms much more user-friendly.

A big project was completed with this one! There will be more work to follow on building upkeep and repair. Little by little, we are attending to the physical plant. Richard "Koz" Kozlowski takes the lead in house care and upkeep along with neighbor Tony Carter. Together they keep the floor clean for the daily round as well. We are contemplating taking a week off this summer in order to replace the now worn dining room floor.

- Volunteers from Tufts Vet School ran an Animal Care Clinic in early January. They will be hosting another in early March. Thanks to Kim O'Konis of Central Mass Kibble Kitchen for making these good connections. Please see https://centralmakibblekitchen.org/ and https://www.facebook.com/CentralMAKibbleKitchen/?fref=ts) for news of Kim's admirable work with poor animals and the people who belong to them!
- Clarification of thought will be held on the second Monday of each month. On February 8th we will host a round table discussion on living out Catholic Worker values. Please join us at 7:00 PM if you have interest. Scott and Claire Schaeffer-Duffy will speak at our April 11th meeting.
- On March 15th, there will be a special gathering at the College of the Holy Cross thanks to David O'Brien on local Catholic Worker history, Catholic Worker alums, and a talk on

Dorothy Day by Robert Ellsberg, the editor of Orbis Books and one time editor of the Catholic Worker. The afternoon talks are open to the public. An update on the canonization process for Dorothy Day will also be featured.

- We will be putting up a Mustard Seed web page soon with the help and generosity of our friend, Sanjay Baronia. News on this will be forthcoming. Our Facebook page continues to draw interest and more followers. You may like us at: https://www.facebook.com/mustardseedcw/. Thanks.
- We remember our Trappist priest friend, Fr. Robert Morhous, who entered eternal life on January 28th. Please see: http://spencerabbey1098.blogspot.com/?spref=fb for details.
- We remember our brother, Timothy Robinson, a very, very long time presence at the Mustard Seed, who entered eternal life on January 27th. Tim was a man of few words but of one great smile. He was eager to be helpful around the house and he will be much missed. Rest in peace, "Big Tim" for you are one of God's beloved poor men and may you with Lazarus be brought into the bosom of the good Lord.
- Office Needs List: We are trying to create an office from which to do much needed clerical and outreach work. We are searching for the following and think perhaps someone might be able to donate such supplies if they've older equipment or excess materials. We thought we would ask before we purchase: a small copying machine (preferably a non-ink jet; one of a toner variety as they are less costly); copy paper; office supplies of all kinds- file folders, file cabinet, envelopes, stationary, toner, etc. Many thanks in advance for any help.
- Other Needs List: canned goods, non-perishables, cereal for the food pantry; soaps, shaving materials, hygiene products to dispense; warm coats and winter wear; paper products- cups, plates, plastic ware, toilet tissue; household items for folks finding housing
- Most important "Need": Prayer (around the clock)!
- The core community will be on our Lenten retreat on March 21st. Please pray that we will be open to what God has in mind for us.
- Once again, thanks be to God and to all of you who through the gift of sheer beneficence keep us and it all going!
- Here's our gift to you: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0e0mxubXaUQ

Blessings galore and for now,

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